

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A medical image diagnostic system for providing an examination protocol including a photographing condition corresponding to a content of an examination for a subject, said system comprising:

5 a network to which a medical image diagnostic apparatus is linked; and

10 a server linked to said network, and configured to register an examination protocol for an examination to be performed by said medical image diagnostic apparatus in connection with examination information indicating a content of the examination, search for an examination protocol that matches with a request condition in response to a request to provide an examination 15 protocol, sent from said medical image diagnostic apparatus, and distribute the searched examination protocol to said medical image diagnostic apparatus that has sent the request,

20 wherein said medical image diagnostic apparatus sends the request to provide an examination protocol to said server and receives the examination protocol distributed from said server via said network.

25 2. The medical image diagnostic system according to claim 1, wherein:

25 said network includes an external network and an internal network of a medical institution;

25 said medical image diagnostic apparatus is linked

to said internal network; and
said server is linked to said external network.

3. The medical image diagnostic system according
to claim 2, wherein:

5 said medical institution includes a plurality of
hospitals;

said internal network inter-links said plurality
of hospitals; and

10 said plurality of hospitals share the examination
protocol.

4. The medical image diagnostic system according
to claim 2, further comprising:

15 a local server linked to said internal network and
said external network, and configured to send, from
said medical image diagnostic apparatus to said server,
the request to provide an examination protocol, and
send the examination protocol distributed from said
examination protocol providing server to said medical
image diagnostic apparatus that has sent the request.

20 5. The medical image diagnostic system according
to claim 4, wherein:

25 said local server registers examination protocols
used in a plurality of medical image diagnostic
apparatuses within said medical institution,
distributes a corresponding examination protocol in
response to a request to a medical image diagnostic
apparatus that has sent the request, and, on behalf of

said plurality of medical image diagnostic apparatuses, sends a request to provide an examination protocol to said examination protocol providing server and receives the examination protocol.

5 6. The medical image diagnostic system according to claim 1, wherein:

10 said server registers an examination protocol uploaded from said medical image diagnostic apparatus in response to a request to register an examination protocol, sent from said medical image diagnostic apparatus; and

15 said medical image diagnostic apparatus, via said network, sends the request to register an examination protocol to said server, and upon receipt of a response from said server, uploads an examination protocol set when an examination was performed on the subject to said server, together with examination information indicating a content of the examination.

20 7. The medical image diagnostic system according to claim 6, wherein:

25 said server requests examination information related to an examination protocol to be uploaded, from said medical image diagnostic apparatus that has sent the request to register an examination protocol.

30 8. The medical image diagnostic system according to claim 6, wherein:

35 said server judges whether the examination

information includes private information at a time of registration, and upon judging presence of the private information, registers the examination information by one of the following:

5 by deleting the private information partially;
by deleting the private information entirely; and
by replacing the private information with another
information.

9. The medical image diagnostic system according
10 to claim 1, wherein:

15 said server registers a keyword indicating
a characteristic of the examination protocol from
the examination information, and searches for
a corresponding examination protocol based on the key
word when the keyword is specified as the request
condition.

10. The medical image diagnostic system according
20 to claim 1, wherein:

25 said server registers an examination purpose for
which the examination protocol is recommended as being
optimal in connection with the examination protocol,
and searches for an examination protocol recommended by
the examination purpose when the examination purpose is
specified as the request condition.

11. The medical image diagnostic system according
25 to claim 1, wherein:

26 said server authenticates an access right when

an access is made to said server.

12. The medical image diagnostic system according to claim 11, wherein:

5 said server makes authentication based on identification information pre-assigned to said medical image diagnostic apparatus.

13. The medical image diagnostic system according to claim 1, wherein:

10 said server automatically distributes an updated examination protocol to a particular medical image diagnostic apparatus when a registered examination protocol is updated.

14. The medical image diagnostic system according to claim 1, wherein:

15 said server automatically maintains an examination protocol in a registered medical image diagnostic apparatus in the same state as a state of an examination protocol recorded in a particular medical image diagnostic apparatus.

20 15. The medical image diagnostic system according to claim 1, wherein:

the examination information includes a medical image acquired when an examination was performed according to the examination protocol; and

25 said server distributes the medical image included in the examination information when providing the examination protocol.

16. The medical image diagnostic system according to claim 1, wherein:

 said server registers a customized result of the examination protocol.

5 17. The medical image diagnostic system according to claim 1, wherein:

 the examination information includes an examination history of the subject; and

10 said server searches for a corresponding examination protocol based on the examination history when the examination history is specified as the request condition.

18. The medical image diagnostic system according to claim 1, wherein:

15 said server is linked to a vendor terminal of said medical image diagnostic apparatus via said network, and thereby allows a vendor of said medical image diagnostic apparatus also to share a registered examination protocol.

20 19. The medical image diagnostic system according to claim 18, wherein:

 said server registers an examination protocol provided from said vendor terminal, and sends an examination protocol uploaded from said medical image diagnostic apparatus to said vendor terminal.

25 20. The medical image diagnostic system according to claim 1, wherein:

said medical image diagnostic apparatus is
 an X-ray photographing apparatus.

21. The medical image diagnostic system according
 to claim 1, wherein:

5 said server prepares a group of examination
 protocols including recommended parameter and
 photographing direction for each region to be examined,
 and distributes the group of examination protocols when
 a region to be diagnosed is specified as the request
10 condition.

22. The medical image diagnostic system according
 to claim 1, wherein:

15 said server sets one of a trial period and the
 number of trials in an examination protocol to be
 distributed.

23. The medical image diagnostic system according
 to claim 1, wherein:

20 upon receipt of the request to provide
 an examination protocol, said server judges a type of
 said medical image diagnostic apparatus that has sent
 the request, and presents examination protocols usable
 and examination protocols unusable in said medical
 image diagnostic apparatus.

25 24. The medical image diagnostic system according
 to claim 1, wherein:

 the examination information includes a name of
 a setter of the examination protocol; and

said server searches for a corresponding examination protocol based on the name of the setter when the name of the setter is specified as the request condition.

5 25. The medical image diagnostic system according to claim 1, wherein:

 said server introduces a recommended examination protocol from a state of use of a user.

10 26. The medical image diagnostic system according to claim 1, wherein:

 a service provider managing said server charges a medical institution having concluded a service contract one of fixed fees in a period unit and fees for a quantity of downloaded data.

15 27. The medical image diagnostic system according to claim 26, wherein:

 when an examination protocol to be provided is set with one of a trial period and the number of trials, said service provider does not charge for the period nor up to the number of trials.

20 28. An information providing server for providing an examination protocol including a photographing condition corresponding to a content of an examination for a subject, said server comprising:

25 a communication portion configured to communicate with a medical image diagnostic apparatus via a network;

a registration portion configured to register an examination protocol used in said medical image diagnostic apparatus in connection with examination information indicating a content of an examination;

5 a search portion configured to search for an examination protocol that matches with a request condition in response to a request to provide an examination protocol, sent from said medical image diagnostic apparatus; and

10 a distribution portion configured to distribute the searched examination protocol to said medical image diagnostic apparatus that has sent the request.

29. An information providing method for providing an examination protocol including a photographing condition corresponding to a content of an examination 15 for a subject, said method comprising:

registering an examination protocol used in a medical image diagnostic apparatus in connection with examination information indicating a content of an 20 examination;

searching for an examination protocol that matches with a request condition in response to a request to provide an examination protocol, sent from a medical image diagnostic apparatus linked via a network; and

25 distributing the searched examination protocol to said medical image diagnostic apparatus that has sent the request.

30. A medical image diagnostic system for providing an examination protocol including a photographing condition corresponding to a content of an examination for a subject, said system comprising:

5 a network to which a medical image diagnostic apparatus is linked; and

10 a server linked to said network, and configured to register a photographing protocol, which is a data set of photographing program in an examination protocol for an examination to be performed by said medical image diagnostic apparatus, search for a photographing protocol that matches with a request condition in response to a request sent from said medical image diagnostic apparatus, and distribute a searched photographing protocol to said medical image diagnostic apparatus that has sent the request,

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20 wherein said medical image diagnostic apparatus sends the request to said server and receives a photographing protocol distributed from said server via said network.

31. The medical image diagnostic system according to claim 30, wherein:

25 said server registers the examination protocol in connection with a target region examined; and

when an examination protocol for the target region examined is chosen in said medical image diagnostic apparatus, a photographing protocol correlated with the

examination protocol is displayed on a monitor based on the registered information.

32. The medical image diagnostic system according to claim 30, wherein:

5 said server registers information related to an operator in connection with the examination protocol; and

10 when the operator of said medical image diagnostic apparatus is chosen, an examination protocol correlated with the operator is displayed on a monitor based on the registered information.

33. The medical image diagnostic system according to claim 30, wherein:

15 said server registers information related to the subject in connection with the examination protocol; and

20 when the subject who will take an examination by said medical image diagnostic apparatus is chosen, an examination protocol correlated with the subject is displayed on a monitor based on the registered information.

34. The medical image diagnostic system according to claim 30, further comprising:

25 a controller configured to customize a photographing protocol based on information appended to image data acquired during an examination performed by said medical image diagnostic apparatus.

35. The medical image diagnostic system according to claim 30, wherein:

5 said server distributes an examination protocol based on information related to a clinical path inputted from said medical image diagnostic apparatus.

36. The medical image diagnostic system according to claim 30, wherein:

10 said server registers information from a medical institution, related to a time needed for one patient to perform an examination according to an examination protocol, and, when distributing the examination protocol, appends thereto the information related to the time needed to perform an examination according to the examination protocol.

15 37. The medical image diagnostic system according to claim 36, wherein:

20 the information related to the time needed for an examination distributed from said server is one of a maximum value, an average value, and a minimum value of times needed for an examination registered in said server.